

November 12, 2002

Name  
Title  
Address  
City, state, zip

Re: Seeking active stakeholders for participating in the  
Early Action Compact to Improve Air Quality

Dear :

Over the years, South Carolina has been proud to say that we attain (meet) all of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). However, expanding populations, increasing industrial development, and more mobile sources (cars, trucks, etc.), along with a more stringent national air quality standard for ground-level ozone, are making it difficult to maintain that status. For that reason, many people do not realize the implications that accompany a non-attainment designation. The most important concern of being designated non-attainment is that the air quality in the area can negatively impact public health. Even at low concentrations, ground-level ozone can cause respiratory problems and aggravated asthma in children, people with respiratory diseases, and even healthy adults who are working or exercising outside on days when ground-level ozone levels are elevated.

From an economic development perspective, there are consequences that come automatically as a result of a non-attainment designation. These consequences include lengthy permitting requirements for industry that could influence their decision whether to locate new operations or expand existing operations in non-attainment areas. Another consequence is the impact on the way federal funds may or may not be spent on such things as road projects in non-attainment areas. While we certainly do not wish to diminish the results derived from such requirements, we would prefer to move forward with measures that both achieve cleaner air before federal mandates would be imposed and make sense for South Carolina.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has indicated to the states that designations for the 8-hour ozone standard may be as early as spring of 2004. While that date may seem far in the future, the reality is that the planning efforts are upon us. States could be required to submit proposed boundary designations as early as spring of 2003. Once an area is designated as non-attainment, the state has three years to develop a traditional State Implementation Plan (SIP) outlining the measures to return the area to attainment. At the earliest, the traditional SIP

November 12, 2002

Page 2

will not be due to EPA until 2007. While the Clean Air Act (CAA) requires designations be made, EPA has provided an option for areas like those in South Carolina, to obtain cleaner air sooner than federally mandated and thus avoid the aforementioned consequences.

On August 23, 2002, a Notice of Drafting was published in the *State Register* expressing our desire to pursue an early action SIP that provides for cleaner air in South Carolina that meets the more restrictive standard prior to the federal deadline(s). During the month of October, we held six public informational meetings around the state in an effort to garner support of our pursuit of an early action SIP. Since that time, we have met individually with several local groups in an effort to further emphasize the importance of obtaining cleaner air sooner for South Carolina.

Attached is a **working draft** of South Carolina's 8-hour Ozone Early Action Compact (EAC). The EAC is a memorandum of agreement between local representatives, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), and the EPA Region 4. Local representatives will work together to determine the participating areas (i.e. Upstate, Central Midlands, Pee Dee, Central Savannah, Coastal, etc.) and revise the **working draft** EAC to reflect necessary modifications for the participating area. Each participating area will agree to develop, by August 31, 2003, a local area early action plan that promotes the area's attainment of the 8-hour ozone standard by December 31, 2007. At the same time, DHEC will be developing the state early action SIP that will demonstrate how the participating areas will reach attainment by December 31, 2007.

The signatories to the EAC are agreeing to work together to develop and implement a local and state early action plan to be incorporated into the early action SIP. It is our promise to work closely throughout the planning and implementation process with each local area to provide, at a minimum, the necessary emissions inventories and modeling processes and other technical assistance needed to determine what local and/or state control strategies are needed to ensure attainment of the 8-hour ozone standard by December 31, 2007, and beyond.

There is definitely a lot of work to be done in a short timeframe, but it is possible. We ask that you review the **working draft** Early Action Compact and become a participant in this proactive effort. EPA requires the EAC to be signed by December 31, 2002; therefore, if you have questions or wish to participate in this process, please contact Henry Phillips at (803) 898-3260 or by e-mail at [phillimh@dhec.state.sc.us](mailto:phillimh@dhec.state.sc.us). Also, please visit our website for this and additional information at [www.scdhec.net/baq/eap.html](http://www.scdhec.net/baq/eap.html). A fact sheet has also been attached to assist you with this issue. Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James A. Joy, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the last name "Joy" being particularly prominent.

James A. Joy, III, P.E., Chief  
Bureau of Air Quality